

## A GLORIOUS GROWTH

REV. DR. TALMAGE SHOWS HOW CHRISTIANITY MOVES FORWARD.

Some Sturdy Blows at Infidelity—Religion Good to Live by and Consoling to Die By—An Encouraging Discourse by the Eloquent Pastor.

BROOKLYN, March 18.—In the Tabernacle today Rev. Dr. Talmage preached a most eloquent and characteristically vigorous sermon in refutation of the oft renewed assertion of the enemies of religion that Christianity is retrograding, and the Bible losing its hold upon the hearts and consciences of men. The subject of the discourse was announced as "From Conquest to Conquest," the text being taken from Amos ix, 13, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper."

Picture of a tropical clime, with a season so prosperous that the harvest reaches clear over to the planting time, and the swarthy husbandman swinging the sickle in the thick grain almost feels the breath of the horses on his shoulders, the horses hitched to the plow preparing for a new crop. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper." When is that? That is now. That is this day, when hardly have you done reaping one harvest before the plowman is getting ready for another.

I know that many declare that Christianity has collapsed; that the Bible is an obsolete book; that the Christian church is on the retreat. I will here and now show that the opposite of that is true.

An Arab guide was leading a French infidel across a desert, and ever and anon the Arab guide would get down in the sand and pray to the Lord. It disgusted the French infidel, and after awhile as the Arab got up from one of his prayers the infidel said, "How do you know there is any God?" and the Arab guide said, "How do I know that a man and a camel passed along our tent last night? I know it by the footprints in the sand. And you want to know how I know whether there is any God? Look at that sunset. Is that the footstep of a man? And by the same process you and I have come to understand that this book is the footstep of a God."

### A HEALTHY GROWTH.

But now let us see whether the Bible is a last year's almanac. Let us see whether the church of God is in a Bull Run retreat, muskets, canteens and haversacks strewn all the way. The great English historian, Sharon Turner, a man of vast learning and of great accuracy, not a clergyman, but an attorney as well as a historian, gives this overwhelming statistic in regard to Christianity and in regard to the number of Christians in the different centuries: In the first century, 500,000 Christians; in the second century, 2,000,000 Christians; in the third century, 5,000,000 Christians; in the fourth century, 10,000,000 Christians; in the fifth century, 15,000,000 Christians; in the sixth century, 20,000,000 Christians; in the seventh century, 24,000,000 Christians; in the eighth century, 30,000,000 Christians; in the ninth century, 40,000,000 Christians; in the tenth century, 50,000,000 Christians; in the eleventh century, 70,000,000 Christians; in the twelfth century, 80,000,000 Christians; in the thirteenth century, 100,000,000 Christians; in the fourteenth century, 120,000,000 Christians; in the fifteenth century, 150,000,000 Christians; in the sixteenth century, 180,000,000 Christians; in the seventeenth century, 200,000,000 Christians; in the eighteenth century, 250,000,000 Christians; in the nineteenth century, 300,000,000 Christians.

Poor Christianity! What a pity it has no friends! How lonesome it must be! Who will take it out of the poorhouse? Poor Christianity! Three hundred millions in one century. In a few weeks of the year 1881 2,500,000 copies of the New Testament distributed. Why, the earth is like an old castle with 20 gates and a park of artillery ready to thunder down every gate. Lay aside all Christendom and see how heathendom is being surrounded and honeycombed and attacked by this all conquering gospel. At the beginning of this century there were only 150 missionaries; now there are 25,000 missionaries and native helpers and evangelists. At the beginning of this century there were only 50,000 heathen converts; now there are 1,750,000 converts from heathendom.

There is not a seacoast on the planet but the battery of the gospel is planted and ready to march on—north, south, east, west. You all know that the chief work of an army is to plant the batteries. It may take many days to plant the batteries, and they may do all their work in 10 minutes. These batteries are being planted all along the seacoasts and in all nations. It may take a good while to plant them, and they may do all their work in one day. They will. Nations are to be born in one day. But just come back to Christendom and recognize the fact that during the last 10 years as many people have connected themselves with evangelical churches as connected themselves with the churches in the first 50 years of this century.

### A GLORIOUS BOOK.

So Christianity is falling back, and the Bible, they say, is becoming an obsolete book. I go into a court, and wherever I find a judge's bench or a clerk's desk I find a Bible. Upon what book could there be uttered the solemnity of an oath? What book is apt to be put in the trunk of the young man as he leaves for city life? The Bible. What shall I find in nine out of every ten homes in Brooklyn? The Bible. In nine out of every ten homes in Christendom? The Bible. Voltaire wrote the prophecy that the Bible in the nineteenth century would become extinct. The century is nearly gone, and as there have been more Bibles published in the latter part of the century than in the former part of the century do you think the Bible will become extinct in the next six years?

I have to tell you that the room in which Voltaire wrote that prophecy not long ago was crowded from floor to ceiling with Bibles from Switzerland. Suppose the congress of the United States should pass a law that there should be no more Bibles printed in America and no more Bibles read. If there are 40,000,000 grown people in the United States, there would be 40,000,000 people in an army to put down such a law and defend their right to read the Bible. But suppose the congress of the United States should make a law against the reading or the publication of any other book, how many people would go out in such a crusade?

Could you get 40,000,000 people to go out and risk their lives in defense of Shakespeare's tragedies or Gladstone's tracts or Macaulay's "History of England"? You know that there are 1,000 men who would die in defense of this book where there is not more than one man who would die in defense of any other book. You try to insult my common sense by telling me the Bible is fading out from the world.

It is the most popular book of the century. How do I know it? I know it just as I know in regard to other books. How many volumes of that book are published? Well, you say, 5,000. How many copies of that book are published? A hundred thousand. Which is the more popular? Why, of course the one that has 100,000 circulation. And if this book has more copies abroad in the world, if there are five times as many Bibles abroad as any other book, does not that show you that the most popular book on the planet today is the word of God?

"Oh," say people, "the church is a collection of hypocrites, and it is losing its power, and it is fading out from the world." Is it? A bishop of the Methodist church told me that that denomination averages two new churches every day of the year. There are at least 1,500 new Christian churches built in America every year. Does that look as though the church were fading out, as though it were a defunct institution? Which institution stands nearest the hearts of the people of America today? I do not care in what village, or in what city, or what neighborhood you go. Which institution is it? Is it the postoffice? Is it the hotel? Is it the lecturing hall? Ah, you know it is not. You know that the institution which stands nearest to the hearts of the American people is the Christian church. If you have ever seen a church burn down, you have seen thousands of people standing and looking at it—people who never go into a church—the tears raining down their cheeks. The whole story is told.

### AN UNPOPULAR BELIEF.

You may talk about the church being a collection of hypocrites, but when the diphtheria sweeps your children off whom do you send for? The postmaster, the attorney general, the hotel keeper, the alderman? No, you send for a minister of this Bible religion. And if you have not a room in your house for the obsequies, what building do you solicit? Do you say, "Give me the finest room in the hotel?" Do you say, "Give me that theater?" Do you say, "Give me a place in that public building, where I can lay my dead for a little while until we say a prayer over it?" No. You say, "Give us the house of God."

And if there is a song to be sung at the obsequies, what do you want? What does anybody want? "The Marseillaise" hymn, "God Save the Queen"? Our own grand national air? No. They want the hymn with which they sang their old Christian mother into her last sleep, or they want sung the Sabbath school hymn which their little girl sang the last Sabbath afternoon she was out before she got that awful sickness which broke your heart. I appeal to your common sense. You know the most endearing institution on earth, the most popular institution on earth today, is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The infidels say, "Infidelity shows its successes from the fact that it is everywhere accepted, and it can say what it will." Why, my friends, infidelity is not half so blatant in our days as it was in the days of our fathers. Do you know that in the days of our fathers there were pronounced infidels in public authority and they could get any political position? Let a man today declare himself antagonistic to the Christian religion, and what city wants him for mayor, what state wants him for governor, what nation wants him for president or for king? Let a man openly proclaim himself the enemy of our glorious Christianity, and he cannot get a majority of votes in any state, in any city, in any county, in any ward of America.

### RELIGION IS SCIENCE.

Do you think that such a scene could be enacted now as was enacted in the days of Robespierre, when a shameless woman was elevated as a goddess and was carried in a golden chair to a cathedral, where incense was burned to her and people bowed down before her as a divine being, she taking the place of the Bible and God Almighty, while in the corridor of that cathedral were enacted such scenes of drunkenness and debauchery and obscenity as have never been witnessed? Do you believe such a thing could possibly occur in Christendom today? No, sir! The police, whether of Paris or New York, would swoop on it.

I know infidelity makes a good deal of talk in our day. It is on the principle that if a man jump overboard from a Cunard steamer he makes more excitement than all the 500 people that stay on the decks. But the fact that he jumps overboard—does that stop the ship? Does that wreck the 500 passengers? It makes great excitement when a man jumps from the lecturing platform or from the pulpit into infidelity, but does that keep the Bible and the church from carrying their millions of passengers into the skies?

They say, these men, that science is overcoming religion in our day. They look through the spectacles of the infidel scientists, and they say: "It is impossible that this book can be true. People are finding it out. The Bible has got to go overboard. Science is going to throw it overboard." Do you believe that the Bible account of the origin of life will

be overthrown by infidel scientists who have 50 different theories about the origin of life? If they should come up in solid phalanx, all agreeing upon one sentiment and one theory, perhaps Christianity might be damaged, but there are not so many differences of opinion inside the church as outside the church.

### THE Fittest SURVIVES.

People used to say, "There are so many different denominations of Christians—that shows there is nothing in religion." I have to tell you that all denominations agree on the two or three or four radical doctrines of the Christian religion. They are unanimous in regard to Jesus Christ, and they are unanimous in regard to the divinity of the Scriptures. How is it on the other side? All split up—you cannot find two of them alike. Oh, it makes me sick to see these literary fops going along with a copy of Darwin under one arm and a case of transfixed grasshoppers and butterflies under the other arm, telling about the "survival of the fittest," and Huxley's protoplasm, and the nebular hypothesis.

The fact is that some naturalists just as soon as they find out the difference between the feelers of a wasp and the horns of a beetle begin to patronize the Almighty, while Agassiz, glorious Agassiz, who never made any pretension to being a Christian, puts both his feet on the doctrine of evolution and says, "I see that many of the naturalists of our day are adopting facts which do not bear observation or have not passed under observation." These men warring against each other—Darwin warring against Lamarck, Wallace warring against Cope, even Herschel denouncing Ferguson.

They do not agree on anything. They do not agree on embryology, do not agree on the gradation of the species. What do they agree on? Herschel writes a whole chapter on the errors of astronomy. La Place declares that the moon was not put in the right place. He says that if it had been put four times farther from the earth than it is now there would be more harmony in the universe, but Lionville comes up just in time to prove that the moon was put in the right place.

How many colors woven into the light? Seven, says Isaac Newton. Three, says David Brewster. How high is the aurora borealis? Two and a half miles, says Lias. One hundred and sixty-eight miles, says Twining. How far is the sun from the earth? Seventy-six million miles, says Lacalle. Eighty-two million miles, says Humboldt. Ninety million miles, says Henderson. One hundred and four million miles, says Mayer—only a little difference of 28,000,000 miles! All split up among themselves—not agreeing on anything. They come and say that the churches of Jesus Christ are divided on the great doctrines. All united they are, in Jesus Christ, in the divinity of the Scriptures. While they come up and propose to render their verdict, no two of them agree on that verdict.

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed on a verdict?" asks the court or the clerk of the jury as they come in after having spent the whole night in deliberating. If the jury say, "Yes, we have agreed," the verdict is recorded, but suppose one of the jurymen says, "I think the man was guilty of murder," and another says, "I think he was guilty of manslaughter in the second degree," and another man says, "I think he was guilty of assault and battery, with intent to kill," the judge would say: "Go back to your room and bring in a verdict. Agree on something. That is no verdict."

### INFIDELITY AT A STANDSTILL.

Here these infidel scientists have impaneled themselves as a jury to decide this trial between infidelity, the plaintiff, and Christianity, the defendant, and after being out for centuries they come in to render their verdict. Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed on a verdict? No, no. Then go back for another 500 years and deliberate and agree on something. There is not a poor, miserable wretch in the Tombs court tomorrow that could be condemned by a jury that did not agree on the verdict, and yet you expect us to give up our glorious Christianity to please these men who cannot agree on anything.

Ah, my friends, the church of Jesus Christ, instead of falling back, is on the advance. I am certain it is on the advance. O Lord God, take thy sword from thy thigh and ride forth to the victory!

I am mightily encouraged because I find among other things that while this Christianity has been bombarded for centuries infidelity has not destroyed one church, or crippled one minister, or uprooted one verse of one chapter of all the Bible. The church all the time getting the victory and the shot and shell of its enemies nearly exhausted.

I have been examining their ammunition lately. I have looked all through their cartridge boxes. They have not in the last 20 years advanced one new idea. They have utterly exhausted their ammunition in the battle against the church and against the Scriptures, while the sword of the Lord Almighty is as keen as it ever was. We are just getting our troops into line. They are coming up in companies, and in regiments, and in brigades, and you will hear a shout after awhile that will make the earth quake and the heavens ring with "Alleluia!" It will be this, "Forward, the whole line!"

And then I find another most encouraging thought in the fact that the secular printing press and pulpit seem harnessed in the same team for the proclamation of the gospel. Every Wall street banker tomorrow in New York, every State street banker tomorrow in Boston, every Third street banker tomorrow in Philadelphia, every banker in the United States, and every merchant will have in his pocket a treatise on Christianity, a call to repentance, 10, 20 or 30 passages of Scripture in the reports of sermons preached throughout these cities and throughout the land today. It will be so in Chicago, so in New Orleans, so in Charleston, so in Boston, so in Philadelphia, so everywhere.

I know the tract societies are doing a grand and glorious work, but I tell you there is no power on earth today equal

to the fact that the American printing press is taking up the sermons which are preached to a few hundred or a few thousand people, and on Monday morning and Monday evening, in the morning and evening papers, scattering that truth to the millions. What a thought it is! What an encouragement for every Christian man!

### A GLORIOUS FACT.

Besides that, have you noticed that during the past few years every one of the doctrines of the Bible came under discussion in the secular press? Do you not remember a few years ago, when every paper in the United States had an editorial on the subject, "Is There Such a Thing as Future Punishment?" It was the strangest thing that there should be a discussion in the secular papers on that subject, but every paper in the United States and in Christendom discussed, "Is There Such a Thing as Retribution?" I know there were small wits who made sport of the discussion, but there was not an intelligent man on earth who, as the result of that discussion, did not ask himself the question, "What is going to be my eternal destiny?" So it was in regard to Tyndall's prayer gauge.

About 12 years ago, you remember, the secular papers discussed that, and with just as much earnestness as the religious papers, and there was not a man in Christendom who did not ask himself the question: "Is there anything in prayer?" Oh, what a mighty fact, what a glorious fact—the secular printing press and the pulpit of the church of Jesus Christ harnessed in the same team!

Then look at the international series of Sunday school lessons. Do you know that every Sabbath, between 3 and 5 o'clock, there are 5,000,000 children studying the same lesson—a lesson prepared by the leading minds of the country and printed in the papers—and then these subjects are discussed and given over to the teachers, who give them over to the children? So, whereas, once, and within our memory, the children nibbled here and there at a story in the Bible, now they are taken through from Genesis to Revelation, and we shall have 5,000,000 children forestalled for Christianity. My soul is full of exultation. I feel as if I could shout—I will shout, "Alleluia, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

### SCIENTIFIC CONSOLATION.

Then you notice a more significant fact, if you have talked with people on the subject, that they are getting dissatisfied with philosophy and science as a matter of comfort. They say it does not amount to anything when you have a dead child in the house. They will tell you, when they were sick and the door of the future seemed opening, the only comfort they could find was in the gospel. People are having demonstrated all over the land that science and philosophy cannot solace the trouble and woes of the world, and they are taking Christianity, the only sympathetic religion that ever came into the world.

You just take your scientific consolation into that room where a mother has lost her child. Try in that case your splendid doctrine of the "survival of the fittest." Tell her that child died because it was not worth as much as the other children. That is your "survival of the fittest." Go to that dying man and tell him to pluck up courage for the future. Use your transcendental phraseology upon him. Tell him he ought to be confident in "the great to be," and the "everlasting now," and the "eternal what is it." Just try your transcendentalism and your philosophy and your science on him.

Go to that widowed soul and tell her it was a geological necessity that her companion should be taken away from her, just as in the course of the world's history the megatherium had to pass out of existence, and then you go on in your scientific consolation until you get to the sublime fact that 50,000,000 years from now we ourselves may be scientific specimens on a geological shelf, petrified specimens of an extinct human race.

And after you have got all through with your consolation, if the poor afflicted soul is not crazed by it, I will send forth from this church the plainest Christian we have, and with one half hour of prayer and reading of Scripture promises the tears will be wiped away, and the house from floor to cupola will be flooded with the calmness of an Indian summer sunset. There is where I see the triumph of Christianity. People are dissatisfied with everything else. They want God. They want Jesus Christ.

Talk about the exact sciences. There is only one exact science. It is not mathematics. Taylor's logarithms have many imperfections. The French metric system has many imperfections. The only exact science is Christianity—the only thing under which you can appropriately write, "Quod erat demonstrandum." You tell me that two and two make four. I do not dispute it, but it is not so plain that two and two make four as that the Lord God Almighty made this world and for man, the sinner, he sent his only begotten Son to die.

I put on the witness stand to testify in behalf of Christianity the church on earth and all the church in heaven. Not 50, not a thousand, not a million, but all of the church on earth and all the redeemed in heaven.

### A QUESTION OF TESTIMONY.

You tell me James A. Garfield was inaugurated president of the United States on the 4th of March, 1881. How do I know it? You tell me there were 20,000 persons who distinctly heard his inaugural address. I deny both. I deny that he was inaugurated. I deny that his inaugural address was delivered. You augural address was delivered. I say I cannot take it anyhow. I did not see and hear him. Whose testimony will you take? You will not take my testimony. You say: "You know nothing about it; you were not there. Let us have the testimony of the 20,000 persons who stood before the capitol and heard that magnificent inaugural." Why, of course that is as your common sense dictates.

Now, here are some men who say they

have never seen Christ crowned in the heart, and they do not believe it is ever done. There is a group of men who say they have never heard the voice of Christ; they have never heard the voice of God. They do not believe it ever transpired or was ever heard—that anything like it ever occurred. I point to 20, 100,000 or 1,000,000 people who say, "Christ was crowned in our hearts' affections; we have seen him and felt him in our soul, and we have heard his voice; we have heard it in storm and darkness; we have heard it again and again. Whose testimony will you take? These men, who say they have not heard the voice of Christ, have not seen the coronation, or will you take the thousands and millions of Christians who testify of what they saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears?"

Yonder is an aged Christian, after 50 years' experience of the power of godliness in his soul. Ask this man whether, when he buried his dead, the religion of Jesus Christ was not a consolation. Ask him if through the long years of his pilgrimage the Lord ever forsook him. Ask him, when he looks forward to the future, if he has not a peace, and a joy, and a consolation the world cannot take away. Put his testimony of what he has seen and what he has felt opposite to the testimony of a man who says he has not seen anything on the subject or felt anything on the subject. Will you take the testimony of people who have not seen or people who have seen?

### A BIT OF ADVICE.

You say morphia puts one to sleep. You say in time of sickness it is very useful. I deny it. Morphia never puts anybody to sleep; it never alleviates pain. You ask me why I say that. I have never tried it; I never took it. I deny that morphia is any soothing to the nerves or any quiet in times of sickness. I deny that morphia ever put anybody to sleep, but here are 20 persons who say they have all felt the soothing effects of a physician's prescribing morphia. Whose testimony will you take? Those who took the medicine or my testimony, I never having taken the medicine? Here is the gospel of Jesus Christ, an anodyne for all trouble, the mightiest medicine that ever came down to earth. Here is a man who says: "I don't believe in it. There is no power in it." Here are other people who say: "We have found out its power and know its soothing influence. It has cured us." Whose testimony will you take in regard to this healing medicine?

I feel that I have convinced every man in this house that it is utterly folly to take the testimony of those who have never tried the gospel of Jesus Christ in their own heart and life. We have tens of thousands of witnesses. I believe you are ready to take their testimony. Young man, do not be ashamed to be a friend of the Bible. Do not put your thumb in your vest, as young men sometimes do, and swagger about talking of the glorious light of the nineteenth century and of there being no need of a Bible. They have the light of nature in India and China and in all the dark places on earth. Did you ever hear that the light of nature gave them comfort for their trouble? They have lancets to cut and juggernauts to crush, but no comfort. Ah, my friends, you had better stop your skepticism. Suppose you are put in this crisis: Oh, father, your child is dying. What are you going to say to her?

Colonel Ethan Allen was a famous infidel in his day. His wife was a very consecrated woman. The mother instructed the daughter in the truths of Christianity. The daughter sickened and was about to die, and she said to her father: "Father, shall I take your instruction, or shall I take mother's instruction? I am going to die now. I must have this matter decided." That man, who had been loud in his infidelity, said to his dying daughter, "My dear, you had better take your mother's religion." My advice is the same to you—oh, young man, you had better take your mother's religion. You know how it comforted her. You know what she said to you when she was dying. You had better take your mother's religion.

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